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Head Quarters,

Marietta, July 31st, 1862

Col. JARED I. WHITAKER, Commissary General:

Colonel: Finding that there was but little prospect, on account of the impossibility of large importations, that private enterprise would afford a supply of salt for our people this year, and knowing how indispensable it was to health and comfort, I determined, as the Executive of the State to do all in my power for the relief of the people, though I might, by assuming the responsibility, be exposed to the censure of speculators and such captious fault-finders as can never be pleased.

After considerable effort, I have succeeded in procuring a lease upon a sufficient supply of salt water at the Virginia Salt Works, to make 500 bushels per day, during the War, and till three months after its termination, if we should need it so long. I have also employed a reliable man to go to work, who is to make all the necessary preparation as soon as possible, and use sufficient labor to make the quantity above mentioned. He is already at work with what kettles and furnaces he has now in order, and expects to be able in another month, to turn out the 500 bushels per day.

Hon. John W. Lewis acted as my agent in the negotiations necessary to secure these results. A large proportion of the credit, if any attaches, is due to him, as I should not have been able to secure the lease and make the other arrangements, without the information received from him, and his personal influence and efforts in the negotiations. He has rendered valuable service, and has refused to receive any compensation for either his time or his expenses while engaged in this business.

My purpose is to sell the salt to the inhabitants of this State, at such price per bushel, as will cover only cost and necessary expenses to the time of the sale. The standard established at the Works is 50 pounds to the bushel. I have to purchase by this standard, and must sell by it, deducting from the 50 pounds whatever may be found to be the wastage from dripping, leakage, &c., after it leaves the works till it is sold to the consumer. Experience will soon show how much each bushel loses in weight during its transportation and storage.

I shall order all the salt consigned to you as Commissary General, and desire you to take charge of it and have it sold by reliable agents, to be employed at such central points as may be selected as distributing points.

If it is ascertained in future that the price now fixed does not pay cost and all expenses, it can be raised until it covers both; or if it does more than this, it can be reduced.

For the present you are directed to dispose of the salt, when received as follows:

1st. You will *give, without charge*, one half bushel to the widow of each soldier who has been killed in battle, or has died in the military service of the State, or the Confederate States. As you cannot know the facts, and make this distribution without assistance from the different counties of the State, I request the Justices of the Inferior Court of each county, to send you a list of the names of all widows of soldiers in their county: with a certificate of two, or more of said Justices, that the persons whose names are sent, are the widows of deceased soldiers. On receipt of such list and certificate, you will ship to said Justices at such point as they may designate, one half bushel for each soldier's widow, to be distributed among them by said Justices.

2d. You will sell to the wife of each soldier now in military service, if she desires it, and to each widow having a son or sons in service, *one half bushel for one dollar*; the names of those entitled to it, to be certified by the Justices of the Inferior Court, as in case of widows of soldiers, and the salt to be shipped to the Justices of Inferior Court in each county, at such point on a Railroad as they may designate, so soon as you have it on hand, and they send you the money for it. It is supposed there is no county in the State whose Justices will refuse to make this advance from the County Treasury, for the benefit of the soldier's families, and to take the trouble and expense of getting the salt from the Railroad, and distributing it among those in the county entitled, at the price mentioned; which can be refunded to the County Treasury when paid in for the salt by those who are to receive it.

Should the widow of a deceased soldier, or the wife of a soldier in service, desire more than a half bushel for her own use, she will be permitted to purchase it at the price paid by others, in preference to all other persons, if there is not a supply for all.

3d. You will sell to all other heads of families at the rate of four dollars and fifty cents per bushel. But no head of a family will be permitted to receive more than one bushel till all are supplied with enough for present use. You will have each agent to keep a book in which he will enter the name of each head of a family who gets salt; and in case one person applies for the quantity allowed each of several families and has the means of hauling it, your Agents will let him have it, taking from him a written certificate giving the name of each person for whom he receives it, and stating that he will deliver it to such person at the price he pays for it, and such price for hauling as may have been agreed on between the parties. The names of the heads of families thus supplied, will be entered on the book, that the person receiving the salt for his neighbors may be detected if he should act unfaithfully. All purchasers will be required to bring with them their own sacks to carry their salt home from the place of sale.

4th. As I can place the salt only at a few central points in the State, you will establish a depot for its sale by a faithful agent, at each of the following places, to-wit: Cartersville, Atlanta, Athens, Augusta, Griffin, Macon, Albany, Columbus, and Savannah. Were I to undertake to send it to all the towns and depots on the Railroads, I must employ so many Agents as to embarrass you in securing prompt settlements, and greatly increase the price by the payment of so many salaries to distributing Agents. You will take bond and security from each Agent, for the faithful discharge of his duties and the prompt payment to you of the money collected by him, and for the delivery to you of the salt on hand at any time when demanded by you or other Agent of the State. Each Agent will sell for cash, and will remit to you the amount he has collected each week. Any Agent failing to make such remittance, will be promptly discharged.

5th. You will notify the Justices of the Inferior Court of each county in this State, of the arrangements proposed for the purpose of supplying the widows of deceased soldiers and wives of soldiers now in service, with salt to relieve present necessities, and request their active co-operation in the proposed plan.

6th. When the people of a county will, by public meeting, appoint a reliable Agent who will obligate himself to them to sell salt for the accommodation of the people of the county, at the prices above mentioned, adding only the freight which he has to pay from the place where he receives it from your Agent to the place of sale, you will be authorised, when you have a supply on hand, to sell for cash, to such county Agent, in such quantities as would be the reasonable proportion for his county, at the prices above specified. This will afford those who are disposed to render a public service without charge, in a matter of vital importance to their fellow-citizens, an opportunity to display their liberality. It is hoped some person with sufficient means will be found in each county remote from the central points of deposit, willing to serve the public for the public good.

The different Railroad Companies in this State have shown a liberality and a disposition to afford relief to the people in the present emergency, which entitle them to the gratitude of all. I determined to carry the salt imported by the State, over the State Road to the places of deposit and sale, *free of charge*, and to carry from the place of sale to the depot of the consumer, *free*. I communicated this determination to the Presidents of the principal Roads of the State, and asked their co-operation, and that they also carry all salt imported by the State free, as well while in possession of the State as for the consumer after he has purchased from the State's Agent; and it affords me great pleasure to say that I have received responses from the following Railroad Presidents, in the order mentioned, promptly and cheerfully agreeing to render this public service free of charge, till further orders: Hon. R. R. Cuyler, President C. R. R. and Branches, and of the S. W. R. R; Isaac Scott, Esq., President Macon & Western R. R; Hon. John P. King, President Ga. R. R. and Branches, and of the A. & W. P. R. R. It is not doubted that the President of each other Road in the State, will meet this request with like liberality and patriotism. The salt imported under my direction will, therefore, no doubt, go to any point in the State, on a Railroad, to the consumer purchasing from the State Agent, free of charge for freights.

I shall do what I possibly can to supply all during the summer and fall, and I trust, with what may be made by the Georgia Salt Manufacturing Company, whose office is located at Augusta, and with what our people will make upon the coast, (it is expected that all who live near the coast will at least make their own supply,) that all who practice strict economy may have enough. I respectfully suggest to our people to subdivide what they may receive, among their neighbors, till more can be had, that none may suffer. And I further suggest that they do all they can to permit speculators, who have a supply on hand for the accommodation of the people at *fifteen to twenty dollars per bushel*, to hold it till the end of the war, when they can probably afford to sell it much cheaper.

JOSEPH E. BROWN.

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